

WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE



FARE POLICY WORKGROUP December 15, 2011

PURPOSE

Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) directed to:

- Conduct a study of the Washington State Ferry (WSF) fares that recommends the most appropriate fare media for use with the reservation system and the implementation of demand management pricing and interoperability with other payment methods
- Include direct collaboration with members of the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) (Transportation Budget)

DEFINITIONS

Interoperability

Degree to which system accepts fare media of other systems and vice versa

WSF System – *Wave2Go*

4 options

- ORCA add Multi-Ride
- *Good To Go!* with Attended Toll Booths
- *Good To Go!* Unattended
- WSF Account-based System

Fare Media

The products that are accepted for payment

Fare Structure

The structure and policies setting the fares & to whom they are charged

CUSTOMERS

The central focus of the study is the WSF customer

Fare media, interoperability, fare structure, reservations, & demand management pricing are *interrelated* and *affect* the customer experience, satisfaction, and ultimately WSF's ridership



STUDY CUSTOMER SURVEY

Washington State Transportation Commission Survey

Customers

- Most customers travel within a single travel shed
 - Central (Bainbridge, Bremerton, Edmonds)
 - North (Mukilteo, Port Townsend)
 - South (Vashon, Fauntleroy, Pt. Defiance, Tahlequah)
 - San Juans & Sidney
- Most households have more than one person who is a WSF rider

Travel Shed

- 75% to 80% of travel shed customers travel only within that shed

of Household Riders

- 1 – 14%
- 2 – 55%
- 3 – 15%
- 4 – 12%
- 5+ – 4%

STUDY CUSTOMER SURVEY

WSF Fare Media

- Customer households use multiple fare products

ORCA

- Large percent within ORCA transit districts have ORCA card
- Important to them to add multi-ride card

WSF Fare Products

- 1 – 7%
- 2 – 31%
- 3 – 27%
- 4 – 21%
- 5+ – 14%

% Who Have ORCA Card

- Central Sound – 52%
- South Sound – 48%
- North Sound – 31%
- San Juans – 10%

ORCA Card Holders Say Multi-Ride Card Important

- Central Sound – 44%
- South Sound – 54%
- North Sound – 44%
- San Juans – 37%

STUDY CUSTOMER SURVEY

Good To Go!

- One-third of customers near *Good To Go!* tolled facilities have an account
- Majority of those with *Good To Go!* say important to use it on WSF
- Additional one-third of customers near tolled facilities planning on getting account
 - More likely to get account if can use on WSF

% Have Good To Go!

- Central Sound – 35%
- South Sound – 36%
- North Sound – 11%
- San Juans – 10%

% Good To Go!

Customers Important to Use It on WSF

- Central Sound – 58%
- South Sound – 60%
- North Sound – 42%
- San Juans – 60%

Good To Go! Plan to get Account

- Central Sound – 32%
- South Sound – 38%
- North Sound – 28%
- San Juans – 31%

STUDY CUSTOMER SURVEY

WSF Combination Account

- Customers would be very likely to use a combined WSF account for all of their WSF fare products
- For a significant percentage of customers the combined account is an important option

Vehicle Reservations

- Customers on routes that would be new to reservations vary in how likely they are to make a reservation
- Highest percentage – San Juans
- Lowest percentage - Bremerton

Likely to participate in a combined account

- South Sound – 71%
- San Juans – 66%
- North Sound – 62%
- Central Sound – 61%

Likely to make a reservation

- San Juans – 76%
- Edmonds – 51%
- Bainbridge – 48%
- Bremerton – 33%

SYSTEM-WIDE INTEROPERABILITY

Recommendations for all routes – exceptions South Sound & Interisland

Recommendation 1. Implement stored ride feature of ORCA for at least the passenger multi-ride card & consider for vehicle if operationally feasible.

- Strong customer interest – particularly in ORCA partner areas
- WSF operations can support passenger multi-ride card
- System update required for *Wave2Go* & ORCA supplier

Cost - \$250,000

Near Term
Implementation – 3 to
5 years

SYSTEM-WIDE INTEROPERABILITY

Recommendation 2. Implement *Good To Go!* at vehicle collection lanes as a peripheral to *Wave2Go*

- Strong customer interest – particularly in areas near *Good To Go!* tolled facilities
- *Good to Go!* a method of payment option
- Fares calculated at tollbooth and billed to *Good To Go!*
- If no *Good To Go!* transponder – pay as now with cash, credit card, or WSF fare media

Cost - \$1.4 million

Near Term Implementation – 5 to 7 years (depends on *Good To Go!* capacity)

SYSTEM-WIDE INTEROPERABILITY

Recommendation 3. Migrate to a centralized account-based system when ready to replace *Wave2Go*. Central account-based system would be either a **WSF system or part of *Good To Go!***

- Strong customer interest in a combined account
- Customer can tie account to a preferred medium – could be *Good To Go!* or ORCA or other
- Allows for new technologies such as cell phone applications, open payment smart cards
- Allow new pricing concepts to be easily implemented

Cost - TBD

Long Term
Implementation – 10+
years

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTION ON FARES

Legislative direction on fares changed in 2008

WSF must:

- Recognize each travel shed unique
- Use data from current WSTC survey
- Be developed with input from public hearings and Ferry Advisory Committees
- Generate revenue required by biennial budget
- Consider impacts on users, capacity & local communities
- Keep fare schedules simple

And must consider:

- Options for using pricing to level vehicle peak demand &
- Options for using pricing to increase off-peak ridership

SYSTEMWIDE FARE STRUCTURE

Recommendation 4. Simplify the fare structure and meet other legislative policy goals by:

- **Modifying the vehicle fares to separate vehicle and driver fares and charge by the vehicle foot**
- **Eliminating surcharges and fees that generate little revenue or cause operational problems**
- **Consolidating fares among routes.**

If all enacted number of fares in the ticket system would be reduced from 643 to 84.

Why simplify fare structure

- Meet legislative mandate
- Improve terminal efficiency
- Customer clarity
- Reduce staff time explaining fares
- Free up *Wave2Go* capacity
- Reduce fare evasion

MODIFY VEHICLE FARES

Separate vehicle & driver fares – eliminates 200 fares

- Drivers pay applicable passenger fare
- Advantages
 - No price impact on customers
 - Reservation deposits easier
- Disadvantage
 - Multi-ride product users – two cards instead of one
 - Makes fares at terminal where passenger round trip fares collected even higher than side vehicle fares only collected

Charge by foot – eliminates 428 fares

- Advantages
 - Encourage small vehicles – more cars on vessels
 - Requires automated measuring devices (costs with *Good To Go!*)

ELIMINATE SURCHARGES & FEES

Reduction in Fares - 163

- Separate commercial fare Sidney (42 fares)
 - Canadian customs no longer allows commercial traffic at Sidney
- Motorcycle oversize charge (22 fares)
 - Consolidate with small car fares – WSF already considering
- Overheight fees vehicle under 30' (86 fares)
 - Operational slowdowns
 - Work into per foot charges – length only
- Bicycle surcharge – (13 fares)
 - Changed 10-1-11 to eliminate some

CONSOLIDATE ROUTE FARES

Reduction in Fares – 245 Fares

- South Sound – All Vashon Island & Southworth
- San Juan Island Vehicle Fares
- Sidney

SOUTH SOUND TRAVEL SHED

Recommendation 5. Consolidate South Sound fares into a single fare structure. Apply fares only to vehicles & collect only through *Good To Go!*

Problems Addressed

Traffic imbalance

- Travel more eastbound on ferry – westbound on Tacoma Narrows Bridge
- No passenger fares collected & no TNB toll

Reservations & demand management

- No reservations due to terminal constraints
- *Good To Go!* option for demand management pricing

Fautleroy congestion

Lack of Vashon & Tahlequah ticket collection infrastructure

SOUTH SOUND TRAVEL SHED

Interoperability

- Only fare collection system *Good To Go!*
- Same as SR 520 – license plate recognition if no transponder
- No integration with *Wave2Go* – *Wave2Go* not used

Fare Structure

- Equal vehicle fares
- By foot (automated measuring devices)
- No passenger fares – in vehicle or walk-on free
- Mirror SR 520 fees for license plate recognition service

Capital Cost - \$0.8 million

Near Term Implementation

- Recommend first *Good To Go!* implementation
- 5 -7 years depending on *Good To Go!* capacity

SOUTH SOUND TRAVEL SHED

Revenue Impact

- Revenue loss - \$3.7 million/year
- Operation savings - \$1.0 million/year
- Net loss \$2.7 million

Fares

- Option - fare loss partially systemwide expense
 - Relationship to Bremerton & Central Puget Sound fares important
 - If 40% system expense fares higher for single occupant vehicle - lower if have 1 or more passengers in vehicle in addition to driver
- Absorb within travel shed
 - Fares higher for single occupant vehicle – lower once 2 people in vehicle in addition to driver

SAN JUANS ISLANDS TRAVEL SHED

Recommendation 6. Consolidate Anacortes-San Juan Island fares, streamline Sidney fares & implement systemwide ORCA and *Good To Go!* interoperability options.

Problems Addressed

Fare Complexity

- 63% of fares in this travel shed

Fare Evasion

- Vehicles pay lower Lopez fare – go to other Island destinations

SAN JUAN ISLANDS TRAVEL SHED

Interoperability

- *Good To Go!* as an additional payment method
- ORCA multi-ride added
- No *Good2Go!* or measuring on Islands
 - Only fares for Interisland

Capital Cost – In systemwide

Near Term Implementation

- 5 -7 years depending on *Good To Go!* capacity
- ORCA and *Good To Go!* implementation lower priority for this travel shed
- Fare change Anacortes to Islands over 3 years
- Fare change Sidney - ASAP

SAN JUAN ISLANDS TRAVEL SHED

Anacortes to Islands Fares

- Equal vehicle fares (same as passenger structure)
- Fares - -preferred approach – move to middle Orcas/Shaw fares
 - Friday Harbor – lower fares
 - Lopez – higher fares
 - Implement over three years
- Revenue Neutral
 - Unless move all fares to Lopez (lowest rate)

Sidney – Anacortes Fares

- One one-way fare
- Free stopover in Islands
- Revenue neutral – still have to buy ticket
- Island residents would have to pay Anacortes – Sidney fare

CENTRAL & NORTH SOUND TRAVEL SHEDS

Interoperability 7. Implement systemwide interoperability recommendations in Central and North Sound and consider reinstating joint transit pass.

Discounted WSF/Transit Pass

- Formerly offered
- Passenger monthly pass + transit pass
- 2011 WSTC Fare Survey (not done for this study) showed customer interest in reinstating

Capital Cost – In systemwide

Near Term Implementation

- 5 -7 years depending on *Good To Go!* capacity
- ORCA and *Good To Go!* implementation high priority except Port Townsend-Coupeville

CAPITAL COST – NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Item	2011 \$ millions
Terminal Equipment	\$1.4
System Integration & Testing	\$0.9
Implementation & Project Management	\$1.1
Total	\$3.4

NEXT STEPS

- Consider legislative implications
- Final Report – JTC January 5, 2012